



Economic Affairs Interim Committee
64th Montana Legislature

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June 22, 2016

Rep. Chuck Hunter, Presiding Officer
Legislative Council
PO Box 210706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Dear Rep. Hunter:

The Economic Affairs Interim Committee voted at its June meeting to request that the Legislative Council consider recommending legislation to change the statute requiring interim committee reviews in each interim of advisory councils and reports associated with agencies that they monitor.

The 2011 Legislature created this ongoing requirement for interim committees with passage of House Bill 142. Following that session, the interim committees reviewed 55 advisory councils and 84 agency reports. The committees ultimately recommended the repeal of four advisory councils and eight reports and amendments to two advisory councils and seven reports.

The Economic Affairs Interim Committee conducted this review in-depth in the 2011-2012 interim but since then has decided to not spend as much time on hearing from every advisory council. Reports still are routinely on the agenda of the last interim meeting. The committee suggests that the purpose of the HB 142 legislation has been accomplished and that periodic reviews might be more beneficial than required reviews.

The suggested change would be either to eliminate the language in 5-5-215(1)(d) or modify the language to do what many interim committees already do, basically review those advisory councils (and reports) for which legislators or constituents have concerns. The language in 5-5-215(1)(d) now says each interim committee shall:

(d) review statutorily established advisory councils and required reports of assigned agencies to make recommendations to the next legislature on retention or elimination of any advisory council or required reports pursuant to 5-11-210;

Removing the requirement would not eliminate voluntary reviews of existing councils or reports, but simply remove a required review. This would allow committees to devote more time to their studies and to monitoring agency activities. If issues arise related to advisory councils or reports, then the monitoring functions of interim committees would still allow reviews.

In addition, a change to 5-5-215, MCA, would not prevent state agencies from bringing their own bills to eliminate councils or reports they feel are no longer necessary.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Ryan Lynch
Presiding Officer